PROJECTS FOR ASSISTANCE IN TRANSITION FROM HOMELESSNESS

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCE PAGE
TRANSITION AGE YOUTH

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES · USA

PATH

Projects for Assistance in
Transition from Homelessness

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INTRODUCTION

The experience of homelessness can be harrowing and traumatic and it is particularly difficult for youth who must find their way on the streets alone. Youth experience the hardship of homelessness differently than adults. Adolescence is a time of growth and gained self-awareness, yet youth who experience homelessness are forced to act like adults and care for themselves while simultaneously trying to figure out who they are. Youth between the ages of 16 and 25 are in a unique position. They are too old for child services. Those under the age of 18 are too young for adult programs, and those between the ages of 18 and 25 may not feel comfortable in adult programs. Few shelter beds are designated specifically for youth, and youth who enter the adult shelter system often face harassment and exploitation. They are left with few options and often end up doubling up with friends or living in abandoned buildings, parks, and vehicles.

This collection of resources is designed to provide reference material for providers who are serving transition age youth in their programs. Because many outreach workers encounter youth, it is important that they are familiar with the types of issues that youth experiencing homelessness may face and understand the types of resources and options available.

Listed below are some key areas that youth who experience homelessness face:

- [Family Issues](#)
- [Traumatic Stress and Mental Health](#)
- [Foster Care](#)
- [High Risk Behaviors](#)
- [LGBTQI2-S](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Housing](#)
- [Education and Employment](#)
- [Rights and Protections](#)

A general overview of resources and documents related to youth homelessness is provided on the following pages, followed by sections on these key areas.

Important Websites

- ○ **National Runaway Switchboard (NRS)**
  The NRS is a national communication system for runaway and homeless youth. The organization's mission is to keep these youth safe and off the streets. On their website you will find educational materials, a curriculum to help keep kids off of the streets, and statistics from their hotline.

  Direct link: http://www.1800runaway.org

- ○ **National Network for Youth (NN4Y)**
  The NN4Y believes in the following principles: valuing youth, empowering youth, strengthening families, promoting healthy alternatives, supporting diversity, encouraging community-based services, networking, and facilitation youth/adult partnerships. Their website has health information, fact sheets, and suggestions for how you can get involved.

  Direct link: http://www.nn4youth.org

- ○ **Street Kids International**
  Street Kids is an international non-profit that works to give youth who experience homelessness the skills and strategies needed to make better choices and create better opportunities for improving their lives. The organization's goal is to develop and disseminate strategies and tools that will give street kids choices, skills, and opportunities. Some of these resources are available on their website.

  Direct link: http://www.streetkids.org

Reports

- ○ **Toro, P. A., Dworsky, A., & Fowler, P. J. (2007). Homeless Youth in the United States: Recent Research Findings and Interventions. In D. Dennis, G. Locke, & J. Khadduri (Eds.), *Toward Understanding Homelessness: The 2007 National Symposium on Homelessness Research.* Washington, DC: Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation.**
  Youth are most at risk for experiencing homelessness but little research has been conducted to examine this. The authors review characteristics of youth who experience homelessness along with recent research findings and intervention strategies to address the issue of youth homelessness.

  Direct link: http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/homelessness/symposium07/toro

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33047

- Ammerman, S. D., Knsigen, J., Kirzner, R., Meininger, E. T., Tornabene, M., Warf, C. W., Zeger, S., & Post, P. (2004). *Homeless young adults ages 18-24: Examining service delivery adaptations.* Nashville, TN: National Health Care for the Homeless Council, Inc.
  This report examines four main topics regarding youth homelessness: health care, housing, education and employment, and social support. Short- and long-term recommendations are given.

  Direct link: http://www.nhchc.org/Publications/younghomelessadult1.pdf

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=23441

Factsheets

- National Coalition for the Homeless. (2007). *Homeless youth NCH fact sheet #13.* Washington, DC: Author.
  This fact sheet reviews the dimensions, causes, consequences, and program and policy issues of youth homelessness.

  Direct link: http://www.nationalhomeless.org/publications/facts/youth.pdf

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=32711

- National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2006). Fundamental issues to prevent and end youth homelessness. *Youth Homelessness Series, 1*, 1-4.
  This brief includes information about causes and characteristics of youth homelessness and the importance of relationships and social networks for youth experiencing homelessness. It also discusses a youth housing continuum, which addresses the broad range of needs youth have in their transition into adulthood. Policy implications and homelessness prevention are also discussed.

  Direct link: http://www.endhomelessness.org/files/1058_file_youth_brief_one.pdf

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=32693

- National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2007). *Fact checker: Youth homelessness.* Washington, DC: Author.
  This fact checker reviews the follow topics on youth homelessness: prevalence, a reflection of family breakdown, foster care and juvenile correction, consequences, the role of the federal government, and future implications.

  Direct link: http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/1659

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=26404

FAMILY ISSUES

Youth may run away from home in response to physical, sexual, or emotional abuse from parents or other family members. Out of the 750,000 to 2 million youth who experience homelessness every year, 51% report physical abuse prior to leaving home (Cauce, Paradise, Ginzler, Embry, Morgan, Lohr, & Theofelis, 2000). Some youth who have been abused learn to distrust adults and believe that safety can come only through leaving home and living on their own. Because youth may not trust adults, it is important to make sure that service settings build trust and are sensitive to their specific needs. An understanding of family dynamica as well as their experiences while homeless will assist in ensuring effective care.

Important Websites

- ○ **Children's Bureau, Administration for Children & Families, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services**
  The Children's Bureau provides information, resources, and links about children's safety and well-being.

  Direct link: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb

- **Child Welfare Information Gateway**
  Child Welfare Information Gateway acts as an extensive resource for information to help protect children and educate and strengthen families.

  Direct link: http://www.childwelfare.gov/index.cfm

Other Resources

- **Anderson, J. (2004). Homeless, runaway & throwaway youth: Sexual victimization and the consequences of life on the streets.** *Research & Advocacy Digest, 7*(1), 1 & 16.
  This article discusses sexual victimization, which can lead to increased risk of sexual diseases, pregnancy, and general poor health, as a prominent cause of youth homelessness.

  Direct link: http://www.wcsap.org/pdf/RAD%207-1.pdf

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33050

- **Wolfe, S. M., Toro, P. A., & McCaskill, P. A. (1999). A comparison of homeless and matched housed adolescents on family environment variables.** *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 9,* 53-66.
  The authors of this article examine familial differences between housed youth and youth experiencing homelessness. Youth who experience homelessness experience more parental neglect and maltreatment than housed adolescents, report feeling less connected to and loved by their families, and experience more familial conflict.

  Direct link (fee): http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a787469122~db=all

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=24448

- **Thompson, S.J., Safyer, A.W., & Pollio, D.E. (2001). Differences and predictors of family reunification among subgroups of runaway youths using shelter services.** *Social Work Research, 25*(3) 163-172.
  Some community-based youth shelters work towards the goal of family reunification. In this article the authors explore the differences among runaway, homeless, throwaway, and independent youth and the factors that predict reunification.

  Direct link:
  http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/nasw/swr/2001/00000025/00000003/art00005

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=32993

TRAUMATIC STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH

Youth experience traumatic stress when they are exposed to traumatic events and are unable to cope with the feelings and aftermath of the experience (The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2007). Traumatic events may include physical or sexual assault, experiencing or witnessing violence, or the sudden loss of a parent or guardian. The stress felt from these events can be acute or chronic. When youth are experiencing homelessness and lack the support of others, they may lose the coping skills to deal with traumatic events.

Dealing with traumatic events, or even just the daily experiences of living on the street or in an emergency shelter, can negatively impact the mental health of youth who experience homelessness. Youth may fear for their safety or health and may develop symptoms of depression. Homeless services workers should be aware of these symptoms and be able to assess for and address post trauma responses, mental health issues, and suicidal ideation.

Important Websites

○ **National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)**

NCTSN is a collaboration of academic and community-based service centers whose goal is to increase awareness and access to services for children who have experienced trauma. Their website provides an in-depth overview of trauma and contains many resources geared towards different audiences.

Direct link: http://www.nctsnet.org

- ◦ **National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention**

  The Center provides technical assistance and training to schools and communities about the importance of mental health promotion and violence prevent. Their website includes evaluation and cultural competence toolkits.

  Direct link: http://www.promoteprevent.org

- ◦ **National Strategy for Suicide Prevention**

  This SAMHSA website contains resources and facts regarding suicide prevention.

  Direct link: http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/SuicidePrevention/

Other Resources

- ◦ **National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (2007).** *Culture and trauma brief: Trauma among homeless youth. Culture and Trauma Brief, 2*(1).

  This brief explores trauma among youth who experience homelessness and the variation of needs and experiences of those adolescents.

  Direct link: http://www.nctsnet.org/nctsn_assets/pdfs/culture_and_trauma_brief_v2n1_HomelessYouth.pdf_____

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=32678

- ◦ **Cauce, A. M., Paradise, M., Ginzler, A., Embry, L., Morgan, C. J., Lohr, Y., & Theofelis, J. (2000). The characteristics and mental health of homeless adolescents: Age and gender differences.** *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 8*(4), 230-239.

  This article examines the incidence of mental health disorders among youth who experience homelessness. The authors find that homeless males typically experience physical abuse during childhood, while females typically experience sexual abuse during childhood and sexual assault while living on the street.

  Direct link (fee): http://ebx.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/8/4/230
  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=23650

- ◦ **Thompson, S. J., McManus, H., & Voss, T. (2006). Posttraumatic stress disorder and substance abuse among youth who are homeless: Treatment issues and implications.** *Brief Treatment and Crisis Intervention, 6*(3), 206-217.

  This article addresses the co-occurrence of posttraumatic stress and substance use disorders among youth who experience homelessness. It discusses two treatment methods tailored to the specific needs of youth living on the street.

  Direct link: http://brief-treatment.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/reprint/6/3/206
  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33051

FOSTER CARE & AGING OUT

Foster care provides housing for youth who cannot live at home or who do not have a home, but it is not intended to be permanent. Youth that remain in the foster care system until they turn 18 or 21 years (depending on the state) are often left to care for themselves. This may lead to homelessness, as youth leaving foster care often lack the skills to support themselves. On average, 25% of youth who age out of foster care experience homelessness (Cook, Fleischman, & Grimes, 1991).

Researchers have consistently identified a link between involvement in foster care and adult homelessness (Ammerman, Meininger, Warf, et al, 2004; Farber, 2005). Individuals who have a foster care history and experience homelessness tend to become homeless at an earlier age than those who have never been in foster care. Research has found various explanations for this pattern: foster care often does not address the problems that caused youth to be removed from their homes; youth transitioning out of foster care often lack the life skills to make it on their own; and youth who age out of foster care often lack the social support to guide them through difficult times (Roman & Wolfe, 1995).

Important Websites

- **National Foster Care Coalition**
  This is a collaboration of organizations and individuals working towards improving the lives of children and adolescents in foster care by building stronger communities.

  Direct link: http://www.nationalfostercare.org

- ◦ **Foster Care Central**

  Foster Care Central is a social network for foster agencies and parents, social workers, and volunteers concerned with improving the well-being of adopted and foster care involved children.

  Direct link: http://www.fostercarecentral.org

Other Resources

- ◦ **Cook, R., Fleischman, E., & Grimes, G. (1991). A national evaluation of Title IV-E Foster Care Independent Living Programs for Youth, phase 2 final report. Washington, DC: Westat.**

  This evaluation of foster care independent living programs provides information about the types of independent living services available and the outcomes for youth post-discharge.

  Direct link:
  http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/12/b5/25.pdf

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33370

- ◦ **Farber, J. (2005).** *18 and out: Life after foster care in Massachusetts.* **Boston, MA: The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.**

  This report examines the issues faced by youth who age out of the foster care system.

  Direct link: http://www.mspcc.org/assets/updoli_18andOut.pdf

  Homelessness Resource Center Record: http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=32707

- ◦ **Roman, N. P. & and Wolfe, P. (1995).** *Web of failure: The relationship between foster care and homelessness.* **Washington, DC: The National Alliance to End Homelessness.**

  The authors conducted research on the connection between foster care and youth homelessness and determined that there is an over-representation of youth who experience homelessness and have been in foster care.

  Direct link: http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/general/detail/1285

  Homelessness Resource Center Record: http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=21062

- ◦ **Casey Family Programs National Center for Resource Family Support. (2001).** *Foster care and homeless youth.* **Washington, DC: Author.**

  This resource provides a brief overview of homeless and throwaway youth who experienced foster care followed by an extensive reference list for further review.

  Direct link:
  http://www.homewardva.org/pdf/sept12bestpractices/Nixon_Dobbins_foster_care_homeless_youth.pdf

  Homelessness Resource Center Record: http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33052

HIGH RISK BEHAVIORS

Youth engage in high risk behaviors on the streets for many different reasons. To cope with the stress of living on the streets, many youth who experience homelessness use drugs and alcohol. Nineteen percent of runaway and throwaway youth are substance dependent and 17% are reported to use hard drugs (Hammer, Finkelhor, & Sedlak, 2002). Because youth who experience homelessness lack financial resources, they may engage in risky or illegal activities to survive. As a result, youth who experience homelessness may face legal consequences, especially if they are minors. If they are caught stealing or engaging in other illegal activity, they may end up in the juvenile justice system. If this happens, they often lack family to bail them out, provide support, or speak on their behalf.

Important Websites

- **National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) for Teens**
  NIDA for Teens provides information for adolescents ages 11 through 15 about the science behind drug abuse. The site includes brain games, facts, and real stories.

  Direct link: http://teens.drugabuse.gov

- **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)**
  OJJDP supports states and local communities in developing and implementing effective programs for adolescents in the juvenile justice system. Their website hosts a variety of topics, statistics, and publications.

  Direct link: http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org

Other Resources

- **Cook, R., Fleischman, E., & Grimes, G. (1991). A national evaluation of Title**
- **IV-E Foster Care Independent Living Programs for Youth, phase 2 final report. Washington, DC: Westat.**
  This evaluation of foster care independent living programs provides information about the types of independent living services available and the outcomes for youth post-discharge.

  Direct link:
  http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/12/b5/25.pdf

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33370

- **Nunez-Neto, Blas. (2007).** *Juvenile justice: Legislative history and current legislative issues.* **Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service.**
  This report highlights key issues and acts regarding the history of juvenile justice in the United States.

  Direct link: http://www.endhomelessness.org/files/1852_file_CRS_report_on_JJDPA_April_2007.pdf

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33053

○ **Rew, L., Tayler-Seehafer, M., & Fitzgerald, M. L. (2001). Sexual abuse, alcohol and other drug use, and suicidal behaviors in homeless adolescents.** *Issues in Contemporary Pediatric Nursing, 24*(4), 225-240.

The authors of this paper examine drug use and sexual abuse rates among youth who experience homelessness by gender and ethnicity.

Direct link (fee):
http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/apl/ucpn/2001/00000024/00000004/art00003

Homelessness Resource Center Record:
http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=24444

○ **Dedel, K. (2006).** *Juvenile runaways: Problem specific guide series no. 37.* **Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.**

This paper outlines the problem of juvenile runaways and how to respond to and understand your local problem.

Direct link: http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/files/ric/Publications/e12051223.pdf

Homelessness Resource Center Record:
http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=32680

LGBTQI2-S
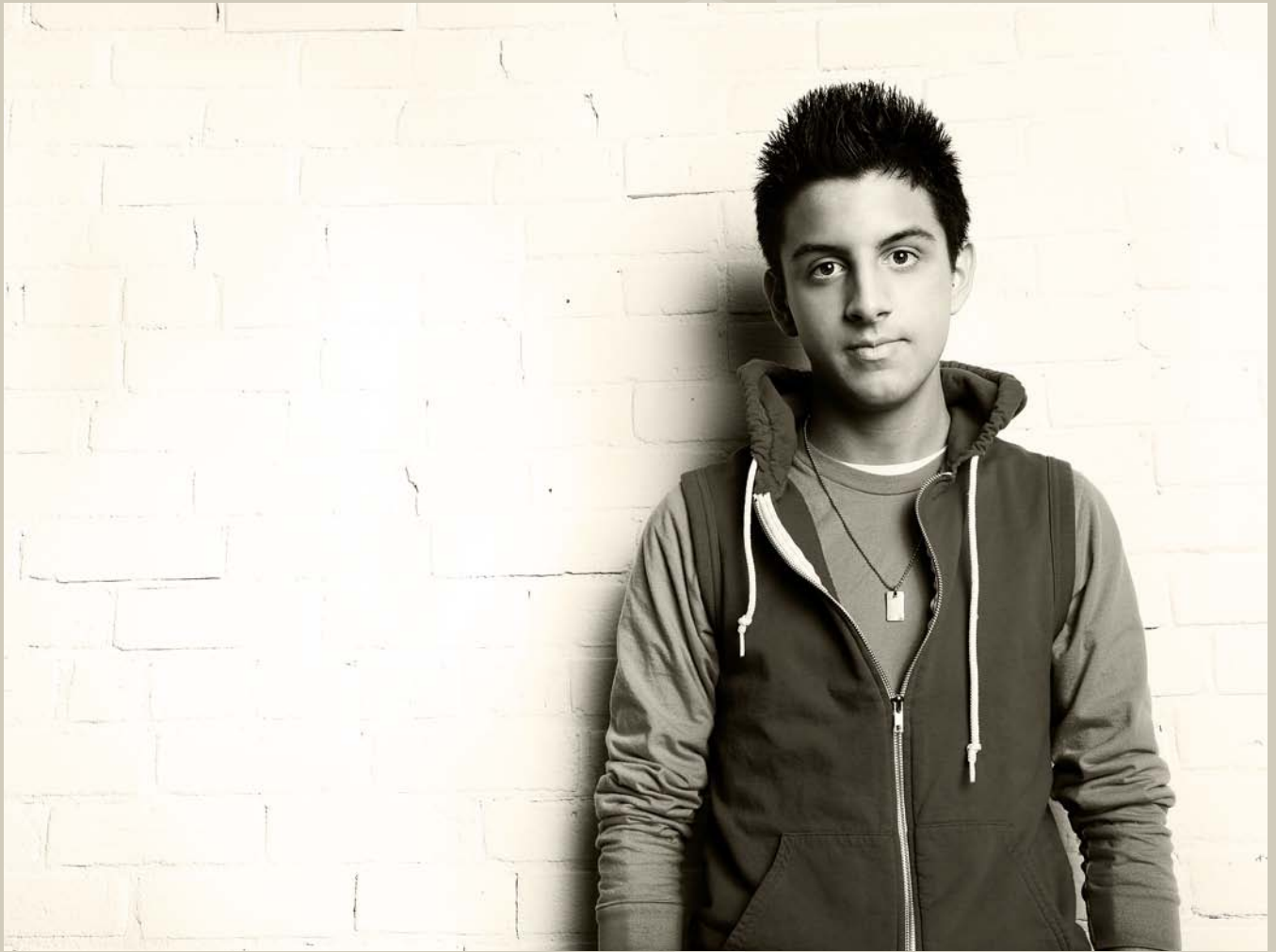
A dolescence is a time for figuring out who you are and what you stand for; this includes sexual identity. Youth who experience homelessness must figure out their sexual identity while living on the street. The following are The National Center for Cultural Competence's definitions for the sexual identities of LGBTQI2-S.

Lesbian: Females who are emotionally and sexually attracted to, and may partner with, females only.

Gay: Males who are emotionally and sexually attracted to, and may partner with, males only. "Gay" is also an overarching term used to refer to a broad array of sexual orientation identities other than heterosexual.

Bisexual: Individuals who are emotionally and sexually attracted to, and may partner with, someone of the same gender or the opposite gender.

Transgender: Individuals who express a gender identity different from their birth-assigned gender.

Questioning: Individuals who are uncertain about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Intersex: Individuals with medically defined biological attributes that are not exclusively male or female; frequently "assigned" a gender at birth, which may differ from their gender identity later in life.

Two-Spirit (2-S): A culture-specific general identity for Native Americans (American Indians and Alaska Natives) with homosexual, bisexual, or transgendered identities. Traditionally a role-based definition, two-spirit individuals are perceived to bridge different sectors of society (e.g., the male-female dichotomy and the Spirit and natural worlds). (Poirier, Francis, Fisher, et al, 2008)

Research suggests that LGBT youth make up 20-40% of youth who experience homelessness (Ray, 2006). Youth who identify as LGBTQI2-S may leave home or be forced out because family members are not accepting of their sexual identities.

One third of LGBT youth who experience homelessness or are in the care of social services experienced a violent physical assault when they came out about their sexual identity (Thompson, Safyer, & Pollio, 2001). Transgender youth face even more stigma and prejudice than their LGB peers. The National Center for Transgender Equality estimates that as many as 1% of the American population identifies as transgender. One out of every five transgender youth will need shelter assistance (Ray, 2006).

Important Websites

- **Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)**
  GLSEN works toward acceptance and respect for all sexual orientations within educational settings.

  Direct link: http://www.glsen.org

- **Parents, Families, & Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)**
  PFLAG supports tolerance, safety, health, and diversity within the LGBT community. PFLAG hopes to educate and enlighten non-sexual minorities, as well.

  Direct link: http://www.pflag.org

- **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force**
  The Task Force's mission is to train and raise awareness within the LGBT community through grassroots efforts.

  Direct link: http://www.thetaskforce.org

- ○ **National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR)**
  NCLR is a non-profit, public interest law firm whose mission is to advance the civil and human rights of sexual minorities.

  Direct link: http://www.nclrights.org

Toolkits

- ○ **Girl's Best Friend Foundation & Advocates for Youth. (2005).** *Creating a safe space for GLBTQ youth: A toolkit.* **Chicago, IL & Washington, DC: Author.**
  This toolkit is intended for programs that work with youth. It includes exercises that highlight the importance of sexual identity education and homophobia awareness.

  Direct link: http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/PUBLICATIONS/safespace/safespace.pdf
  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=32960

- ○ **Mottet, L. & Ohle, J. M. (2003).** *Transitioning our shelters: A guide to making homeless shelters safe for transgender people.* **Washington, DC: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute, National Coalition for the Homeless.**
  This guide examines the importance of making shelters accepting and safe for transgendered people. It discusses legal and health issues and policy initiatives.

  Direct link: http://www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/reports/reports/TransitioningOurShelters.pdf
  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=22601

- ○ **Poirier, J. M., Francis, K. B., Fisher, S. K., Williams-Washington, K., Goode, T. D., & Jackson, V. H. (2008).** *Practice brief 1: Providing services and supports for youth who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex, or two-spirit.* **Washington, DC: National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development.**
  This brief outlines the needs of and systems level approaches for assisting and supporting LGBTQI2-S youth.

  Direct link: http://www11.georgetown.edu/research/gucchd/nccc/documents/lgbtqi2s.pdf
  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33054

Reports

- ○ **Ray, N. (2006).** *Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth: An epidemic of homelessness.* **Washington, DC: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute and National Coalition for the Homeless.**

  This report discusses the prevalence of homelessness among LGBT youth in the United States and has profiles of several organizations that work specifically with this population.

  Direct link: http://www.thetaskforce.org/reports_and_research/homeless_youth

  Homelessness Resource Center Record: http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=32663

- ○ **Cochran, B. N., Stewart, A. J., Ginzler, J. A., & Cauce, A. M. (2002). Challenges faced by homeless sexual minorities: Comparison of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender homeless adolescents with their heterosexual counterparts.** *American Journal of Public Health, 92(5), 773-777.*

  This study examines differences between youth who experience homelessness of different sexual orientations and found that those who identify as sexual minorities face more negative experiences.

  Direct link: http://www.ajph.org/cgi/reprint/92/5/773

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=19539

- ○ **Thompson, S.J., Safyer, A.W., & Pollio, D.E. (2001). Differences and predictors of family reunification among subgroups of runaway youths using shelter services.** *Social Work Research, 25(3) 163-172.*
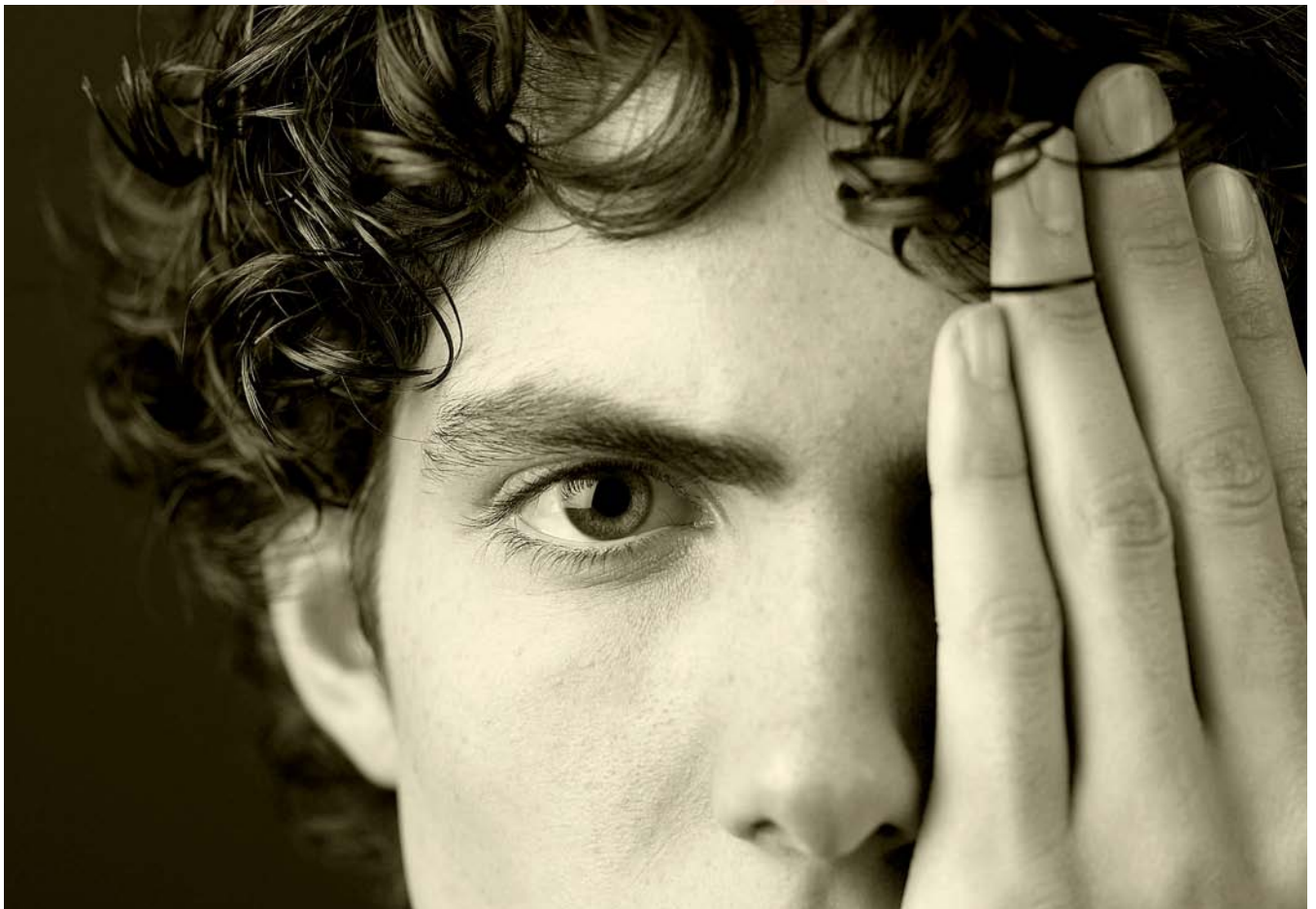
  Some community-based youth shelters work towards the goal of family reunification. In this article the authors explore the differences among runaway, homeless, throwaway, and independent youth and the factors that predict reunification.

  Direct link (fee):
  http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/nasw/swr/2001/00000025/00000003/art00005

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=32993

HEALTH

Lack of early intervention, preventive care, and health insurance causes youth who experience homelessness to be at a greater risk for illness and poor health than their housed peers. Youth who experience homelessness are often not able to get the treatment and medication they need and may face health conditions such as asthma, skin diseases, and sexually transmitted infections.

The culture and practices of youth who experience homelessness can act as a hindrance to health care access. Many youth find it difficult to trust adults whom they believe will stigmatize them. Health care professionals often do not have training that addresses issues specific to youth who experience homelessness or teaches them how to interact with this population.

Low barrier services can be helpful here when working with homeless adolescents. This approach realizes that youth may be at different stages of readiness for change and facilitates a relationship between providers and patients despite a youth's hesitancy. This model acknowledges the small steps youth make toward living healthier lives. It can often be more beneficial in the long run because it facilitates a trusting relationship between the provider and the youth.

Important Websites

- **Outside In, Portland Oregon**
  Outside In provides an array of innovative services to youth experiencing homelessness. They have several services designed to reach the large number of homeless youth not receiving health care. Along with traditional medical services for youth who are homeless, they use peer outreach workers and provide alternative health services such as acupuncture and tattoo removal.

  Direct Link: http://www.outsidein.org/

- **Health Care for the Homeless Clinician's Network: Healing Kids**
  This online newsletter contains links to a variety of resources, information, and information related to serving the medical needs of youth experiencing homelessness.

  Direct Link: http://www.nhchc.org/healingkidsnewsletters.html

- **Street Yoga**
  Street Yoga is an organization in Portland, Oregon whose mission is to prevent and end youth homelessness through teaching free yoga, meditation, and wellness classes. These classes work to support physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

  Direct link: http://streetyoga.org

Other Resources

- **Bryne D. A., Grant R., & Shapiro, A. (2005). *Quality health care for homeless youth: Examining barriers to care.* New York, NY: The Children's Health Fund.**
  Bryne, Grant, and Shapiro address the health needs and delivery of care for youth who experience homelessness, and recommends treatment and practice methods. Public policy initiatives are also discussed.

  Direct link: http://www.childrenshealthfund.org/publications/pubs/HmlsYouthWP0705.pdf

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33057

- De Winter, M. & Noom, M. (2003). Someone who treats you as an ordinary human being…Homeless youth examine the quality of professional care. *British Journal of Social Work*, 33, 325-337.

  This article describes a peer-research project in which youth who experience homelessness interviewed each other about the quality of professional health care they have received and recommendations for improvements.

  Direct link (fee): http://bjsw.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/33/3/325

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=32658

- Ensign, J. (2004). Quality of health care: The views of homeless youth. Health Services Research, 39(4, Pt. 1), 695–708.

  This report describes a study intended to develop homeless-youth-identified process and outcome measures of quality of health care. Areas that were identified as important to youth were the cultural and interpersonal aspects of quality of care; health care sites that were separate from those for homeless adults; and a choice of allopathic and/or complementary medicine. Health care outcomes included surviving homelessness, functional and disease-state improvement, and having increased trust and connections with adults and with the wider community.

  Direct link:
  http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?tool=pubmed&pubmedid=15230923

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://www.homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33373

- Bureau of Primary Health Care. (2001, January 24). Program assistance letter: Understanding the health care needs of homeless youth. Bethesda, MD: Health Care for the Homeless Branch.

  This document was developed as a program assistance letter to grantees of the Bureau of Primary Health Care. It was developed in response to a growing awareness by providers of and advocates for health care for homeless people that youth have special health care needs.

  Direct link: http://www.ich.gov/library/HHS-HCHguidance_2001.pdf

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/resource/view.aspx?id=25084

HOUSING

It is very difficult for youth to acquire and maintain affordable housing. Youth lack the financial resources to afford housing. They often lack the support of their parents, who may be needed for co-signing contracts and for advice about budgeting and savings. Housing is a legal issue for underage youth who experience homelessness who are not permitted to sign legal documents without a parent or guardian; this may prevent them from signing a lease for an apartment. Also, because youth who experience homelessness may lack a good, or any, credit history or references, landlords often will not rent to them.

Important Websites

◦ **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**
HUD is a governmental organization whose mission is to support community development and increase the number of people with affordable housing. The website provides a comprehensive list of resources and links to other helpful websites. A section of this website features youth programs.

Direct link: http://www.hud.gov

Direct link to Youth Programs: http://www.hud.gov/library/bookshelf14/youth.cfm

◦ **Locate a Family and Youth Services Bureau Transitional Living Program**
This website can be used to locate a transitional living program, or other Runaway and Homeless Youth Act program, in your area.
Direct link: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/youthdivision/programs/locate.htm

Other Resources

◦ **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2003).** *All the way home: Creating partnerships to house emancipated foster and homeless youth.* **Washington, DC: Author.**
This report provides an overview of youth homelessness in the United States. It discusses family issues, economic self-sufficiency, and foster care, among other issues.
Direct link: http://www.homebaseccc.org/PDFs/More_PDFs/allthewayhome.pdf

Homelessness Resource Center Record:
http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33058

◦ **Straka, D., Tempel, C., & Epstein, E. (2000).** *Supportive housing for youth: A background of the issues in the design and development of supportive housing for homeless youth.* **New York, NY: Corporation for Supportive Housing.**
This toolkit provides comprehensive resources on youth who experience homelessness including housing, model programs, funding information, training, and legal and policy matters.

Direct link: http://documents.csh.org/documents/pd/youth/youthsh.pdf
Homelessness Resource Center Record:
http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=21478

◦ **Administration for Children and Families. (n.d.).** *Fact sheet: Transitional living program for older homeless youth.* **Washington, DC: Author**
The Transitional Living Program was born out of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act. This fact sheet provides more information about the program.

Direct link: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/youthdivision/programs/tlpfactsheet.htm
Homelessness Resource Center Record:
http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33363

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

High school education is necessary for nearly all career paths. Unfortunately, formal education is often not a priority for youth experiencing homelessness, as they are primarily concerned with meeting their basic needs. If they have run away from unsafe situations, they may fear being turned in if they attend school. If a youth who experiences homelessness is living out of a shelter or on the streets, he may be unable to complete homework assignments.

Much of the national work on youth rights relates to education. In terms of education, youth who experience homelessness have the right to choose their school. If they live in a shelter, they can still attend the school in the district of their prior address. Youth who experience homelessness have the right to fee waivers for items such as books and uniforms; they have the right to free lunch and transportation, along with equal access to all programs the school has to offer (e.g., gifted & talented, special education, and sports).

Employment is not easy for youth without homes to obtain. Those who do work are often only able to find employment in entry-level, low-paying positions that may be seasonal or temporary. These types of jobs do not provide health insurance or enough money to afford quality housing. Even if they are able to sustain employment, youth who experience homelessness are rarely given the opportunity to rise up out of their poverty due to the instability of the work available.

EDUCATION TOOLS

Important Websites

- **National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAECY)**
  NAEHCY supports the education of homeless children and youth. NAEHCY acts as advocate for these children to ensure they have equal opportunities to education. They utilize collaborations among teachers, parents, researchers, and service providers.

  Direct link: http://www.naehcy.org

- **U.S. Department of Education**
  The U.S. Department of Education's main goal is to promote and support student's achievement in academic settings. The website provides useful information and links for students, parents, teachers, and administrators. There is even a section specific to the rules and legislation regarding homelessness.

  Direct link: http://www.ed.gov

  Direct link to Homelessness: http://www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/legislation.html

- **National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)**
  NCHE provides information and resources to help communities address the educational needs of homeless children and youth.

  Direct link: http://www.serve.org/nche/

Other Resources

- *National Coalition for the Homeless. (2006). McKinney-Vento Act NCH fact sheet #18. Washington, DC: Author.*
  This fact sheet provides information on the history, content, evolution, and recent trends of the McKinney-Vento Act.

  Direct link: http://www.nationalhomeless.org/publications/facts/McKinney.pdf

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33060

- **National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. (2003).** *Homeless students and the school lunch program fact sheet.* **Washington, DC: Author.**
  Here you will find information on free school lunch programs for youth who experience homelessness.

  Direct link: http://www.nlchp.org/content/pubs/Homeless%20Students%20and%20the%20 School%20Lunch%20Program%20Fact%20Sheet1.pdf

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33061

- **U.S. Department of Education. (2004).** *Education for homeless children and youth program. Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 non-regulatory guidance. Washington, DC: Author.*
  This report discusses the McKinney-Vento program which assists youth who experience homelessness with education-related issues. It provides updated information about foster care, displacement, and transportation in connection with McKinney-Vento.

  Direct link: http://www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/guidance.pdf

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=24145

- **National Coalition for the Homeless. (2007).** *Education of homeless children and youth NCH fact sheet #10. Washington, DC: Author.*
  This fact sheet provides an extensive overview on the barriers and issues faced by youth who experience homelessness in public school. A list of resources for further exploration is also provided.

  Direct link: http://www.nationalhomeless.org/publications/facts/education.pdf

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=22701

- **National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. (2007).** *Educating homeless children and youth: The guide to their rights. Washington, DC: Author.*
  This booklet explains that even with the enactment of McKinney-Vento, there is a lot that needs to be done to assist youth who experience homelessness within the school system. It answers questions about resources, enrollment, special services, privacy, and disputes.

  Direct link: http://www.nlchp.org/content/pubs/Basic%20McKinney%20Booklet%20 (2007)1.pdf

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33063

- **National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. (2005).** *Connecting homeless students to special education services: A guide to rights and resources. Washington, DC: Author.*
  This booklet highlights the importance of helping homeless students get access to special education services when needed. Because they change schools frequently and often don't know their rights as students, they are overlooked for special education services.

  Direct link:
  http://www.nlchp.org/content/pubs/Connecting%20Hmless%20Students%20to%20Special%20 Ed1.pdf

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33064

EMPLOYMENT TOOLS

Important Websites

- **Youth Employment Systems (YES)**
  YES is a global initiative working to alleviate the high levels of youth unemployment through building youth leadership skills and partnering with organizations to find ways to utilize the skills youth have to offer.

  Direct link: http://www.yesweb.org

- **US Department of Labor: Youth & Labor**
  This page of the US Department of Labor site outlines the rules and regulations for employing youth.

  Direct link: http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/youthlabor/

Other Resources

- **Lenz-Rashid, S. (2006). Employment experiences of homeless young adults: Are they different for youth with a history of foster care?** *Children & Youth Services Review, 28*(3), **235-259.**
  This article discusses the employment issues facing youth who experience homelessness and evaluates them through an employment training program.

  Direct link (fee): http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6V98-4G94HGJ-4&_user=10&_rdoc=1&_fmt=&_orig=search&_sort=d&view=c&_acct=C000050221&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=10&md5=479331d71994670d159b8f716272465f

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33059

- **US Department of Labor. (2000).** *Report on the youth labor force.* **Washington, DC: Author.**
  The US Department of Labor compiled this report to discuss the current regulations that govern child labor, to see what child labor really looks like in the US by comparing different demographic groups, and to examine the outcomes and consequences of child labor.

  Direct link: http://www.bls.gov/opub/rylf/pdf/rylf2000.pdf

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33362

RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS

It is important for youth who experience homelessness to understand what rights they are entitled to and how to go about ensuring and protecting these rights. They need to know who they can turn to for assistance when they feel they've been treated unfairly. Youth rights often vary from state to state and some background research may be needed to find out specifically what the issues are in each state.

Important Websites

- **National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (NLCHP)**
  NLCHP is a national legal advocacy organization that works toward ending and preventing homelessness. Lawyers work directly as advocates and supporters of homeless individuals through working in courtrooms and on legislation.

  Direct link: http://www.nlchp.org

- **Child Welfare Information Gateway: Outcomes for Emancipated Youth**
  This website has links to several different reports on the outcomes of emancipation for different populations of youth.

  Direct link: http://www.childwelfare.gov/outofhome/independent/examples.cfm

- **A Teenagers Guide to Emancipation**
  This guide, produced for the state of Connecticut, gives information about that state's rules and guidelines for emancipation. It is important to remember that rules vary by state but this is a good starting point to get some ideas and information.

  Direct link: http://www.larcc.org/pamphlets/children_family/teen_emancipation.htm

- ◦ **Youth Rights Network**
  This wiki (website that is edited by its users) provides information about youth rights and has emancipation information for several states. Because anyone can edit the website, it is important to verify any information found in a wiki before you cite it, but this is a good place to learn generally about youth rights.

  Direct link: http://www.youthrights.net/index.php

- ◦ **Youth Law Center**
  The Youth Law Center focuses exclusively on protecting the rights of children who are in the foster care and juvenile justice systems. Topic areas include education, medical and mental health, legal support, and transition services.

  Direct link: http://www.ylc.org/

Fact Sheets

- ◦ **National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. (2003). SSI: The rights of homeless children and youth. Washington, DC: Author.**
  This fact sheets provides information on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and how youth who experience homelessness are eligible. It explains how someone can apply and all of the stipulations for being in the program.

  Direct link:
  http://www.nlchp.org/content/pubs/SSI%20Rights%20Children%20and%20Youth2.pdf

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=22202

Toolkits

- ◦ **National Center for Homeless Education. (n.d.). Information for school-aged youth. Greensboro, NC: National Center for Homeless Education.**
  This flyer provides facts about the rights and protections of youth who experience homelessness and families.

  Direct link: http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/youthposter_eng_color.pdf

  Homelessness Resource Center Record:
  http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33062

We will continue to build on this resource page and welcome your input!

Contact the PATH TA Center at path@samhsa.hhs.gov (with "Homeless Youth Resource Page" in the subject line) to comment, submit a question, contribute a tool, or suggest materials to be added.

WHAT IS PATH?

Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness

The PATH Program—or Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness—was authorized by the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Amendments Act of 1990. PATH funds community-based outreach, mental health and substance abuse services, case management, and limited housing services for people experiencing serious mental illnesses—including those with co-occurring substance use disorders—who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of becoming homeless.

PATH funds stimulate state & local contributions

PATH funds are worth more than their face value because they are matched with state and local resources. For every $3 in federal funds, state or local agencies must put forward $1 in cash or in-kind services. At a minimum, a $52 million Federal allocation would result in a $17 million match. In some states PATH funds and the state and local match are the only resources specifically for serving people experiencing homelessness and mental illnesses.

PATH providers deliver innovative services

PATH providers work with service delivery systems and embrace practices that work. These include:

◦ Partnering with housing first and permanent supportive housing programs

◦ Providing flexible consumer-directed and recovery-oriented services to meet consumers where they are in their recovery

◦ Employing consumers or providing consumer-run programs

◦ Partnering with health care providers, including Health Care for the Homeless to integrate mental health and medical services

◦ Assertively improving access to employment

◦ Improving access to benefits, especially through SSI/SSDI Outreach, Advocacy, and Recovery (SOAR)

◦ Using technology such as PDAs, electronic records, and HMIS

PATH providers are strong community partners

PATH providers and State Contacts are involved in local and regional planning efforts to end homelessness, including Continuum of Care, 10-Year Plans to End Homelessness, and other planning efforts. PATH providers and State Contacts work to ensure that services are coordinated and available to people experiencing homelessness.

For more information about PATH, please visit http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/

PATH

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